

Three Philadelphia Police Get Lesson on

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NEW ORLEANS.—Three of Philadelphia's top police officers flew to New Orleans to observe the bloody shoot-out at the Howard Johnson Hotel in which six persons—four of them policemen—were killed by sniperfire. At least 16 other persons were wounded.

Lt. Ronald Ryder and Detective Joe Hand, both of Philadelphia's intelligence squad, and Capt. John Lee, of the stakeout squad, came down here to learn how New Orleans police dealt with a real emergency.

The three officers will return home with a perfect blueprint for confusion. They learned, if nothing else, what police should not do if guerilla warfare ever strikes Philadelphia.

As an example, as late as this Tuesday afternoon the New Orleans police were refusing to reveal the name of the sniper they had shot dead 36 hours earlier on the roof of the hotel. But a security break in police communications allowed that information to seep out anyway.

Black, who writes column for Inf.
THE DEAD SNIPER'S name was Mark Essex. He was 24 years old and a native of Emporia, Kan. He had been living in New Orleans ever since his discharge from the Navy in 1969. His mother, a prominent woman in Emporia, is director of the Head Start program there.

The leak in the police security cover is typical of the official confusion that has embarrassed city officials ever since the outbreak of the hotel siege.

Even as this is being written, New Orleans' top police officers are busy creating a Superman, a man capable not only of leaping from a tall building, but surviving the leap and vanishing as well . . .

New Orleans Police Superintendent Clarence Giarrusso revealed the existence of the guerilla Superman to assembled newspaper and TV journalists at an impromptu meeting Monday night.

"The second sniper who escaped must have been a man of super intelligence, a super guerilla," Giarrusso asserted. "Of course, he may have escaped through our own negligence," he added somewhat ruefully.

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 1973 Philadelphia Inquirer 3-A

How Not to Deal With Sniper Emergency

Giarrusso began pushing the Superman theory Tuesday to explain how one, possibly even two, mysterious snipers vanished without a trace from the hotel roof after terrorizing downtown New Orleans for more than 48 hours.

POLICE SHARPSHOOTERS, firing from a helicopter, killed a lone sniper—later identified as Essex—atop the building Sunday night.

But four hours after the sniper's death, three policemen were wounded by gunfire from the same rooftop.

Giarrusso, who does not like to admit his police bungled, had two options open to him Tuesday. He could say only one sniper was involved, thereby admitting his own police were shooting one another in the dark, or he could say there was another sniper who somehow slipped through their fingers.

It would have taken a man of super intelligence, a gemius, to get out of that hotel, Giarrusso said.

"We searched every room at the hotel, every nook and cranny. I don't see how we could have missed him," he said.

At present, police are theorizing that the missing sniper may have escaped by changing his clothes for those of a slain policeman, then walking casually out of the building. This would fit in with the original Superman's quick-change artistry.

DESPITE GIARRUSSO'S Superman explanation, it would not have been impossible, or even extremely difficult, to enter or leave the embattled hotel during the gunfight.

At 4 P. M. Monday, while an army of police were still searching the hotel, I was able to walk unobserved and unchallenged to the back of the building, where — had I wanted to — I could have entered through an unlocked rear door.

When I approached a police cruiser and asked if anyone was guarding the unlocked door, a cop shrugged his shoulders with indifference. He never even asked for my identification, although the area was off-limits, even to newsmen.